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NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS

A Handbook of Ethical Theory. By GEORGE STUART FULLERTON. Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1922.—pp. xi, 380.

Professor Fullerton's handbook offers a well-organized and judicious presentation of the subject-matter it announces—the outstanding issues of ethical theory. In point of content it differs somewhat from most other recent texts in ethics. It makes no attempt to trace the development either of morality or of ethical theory, or to analyze at any great length the concrete problems that confront individuals in their daily life. Nevertheless it puts to constant and skillful use the facts which such students as Westermarck and Hobhouse have assembled in the field of comparative morality. Its references to historical ethical systems, moreover, are numerous, and an entire section, Part VII, is devoted to "The Schools of the Moralists," the chapters being entitled "Intuitionism," "Egoism," "Utilitarianism," "Nature, Perfection, Self-Realization," "The Ethics of Evolution," "Pessimism," and "Kant, Hegel, and Nietzsche." In the course of the discussion, furthermore, numerous concrete ethical problems are touched upon, and there are brief chapters on "The Ethics of the Individual" and "International Ethics." Fairly consistently, however, all this material is utilized to introduce general ethical questions and to vindicate either specific answers or at least the use of certain principles and methods for the discovery of such answers.

Part I illustrates the divergencies manifested both in the ideals of communities and in the codes of the classical moralists, and argues that, if we would not make our estimates of comparative worth arbitrarily, we must assume the critical and reflective tasks of the ethicist. The nature of ethics, its method, materials and aims, are discussed in Part II. This is followed by an account of man's nature and the material and social environment in which it takes form and expresses itself. Part IV, "The Realm of Ends," centers about the nature and the relation to one another of impulse, desire and will, and likewise of intention and motive. Parts V and VI are of pivotal significance: the one describes the characteristics and the expressions of the social will and considers the question as to who are properly sharers in it; the other discusses "The Real Social Will" under the chapter headings "The Imperfect Social Will," "The Rational Social Will," and "The Individual and the Social Will." Following Part VII, mentioned above, are seven concluding chapters brought together under the title, "The Ethics of the Social Will."

The author espouses an "Ethics of Reason"—reason, however, not in the rationalistic sense but as a principle organizing the life of the individual and progressively expressing itself in institutions, customs, traditions, and laws. The impulsive and volitional nature of man are regarded as basic while yet it is maintained that ethical judgments can be passed only on beings who possess reason. [This, it is indicated, involves membership in a community which is itself rational in the sense that its opinion, laws and organizations, however darkly or imperfectly, exhibit structure, prohibit and enjoin modes of conduct, conspire to certain ends, and themselves more or less consistently take form in accordance with the demands of reason. Wisdom and morality alike, it is contended, dictate a deep respect for the actual historical development of the community life and for the forms it has come to assume. Yet the actual social will is not ultimate; it must itself appear before the higher tribunal of reason, "the reason of the race—the reason appropriate to the race as enlightened and freed from the shackles of local prejudice and restricted sympathy" (p. 175). What are the aims of the rational, as distinct from any actual, social will? They are: "(1) The harmonious satisfaction of the impulses and desires of man. (2) Such an unfolding of these powers as will increase their range and variety, broaden man's horizon, and give him an increased control over erratic impulses. (3) The bringing about of a social state in which the will of each individual within a community counts for something, and not merely the will of a chosen few. (4) The broadening of the conception of what constitutes a community, so that ever-increasing numbers are regarded as having claims that must be recognized. (5) The taking into consideration of the whole of life; the whole life of individuals and of communities, so that the insistent present shall not be given undue weight, as against the future" (p. 174).

Professor Fullerton's central doctrine is that of the "Rational Social Will." It seems to be essentially the teaching of Hegel, though stated in clear and modern language and modified under the pressure of subsequent psychological and historical developments. To be sure, the page devoted to the ethics of Hegel, and other occasional references, might give the impression not so much of a debt to this thinker as of a departure from him. Yet the difficulties found in Hegel do not seem to be successfully escaped. True, the author not only avoids sarcasms and diatribes in discussing the rights and the rationality of the conscience and the 'reason' of the individual, but in fact gives these a very definite recognition; and, though stressing the fundamental rationality of the actual social order, is clear in his insistence on its limitations, imperfections and irrationalities—in short, its distinction from the rational social will. But, if sentences are taken in their context, it can scarcely be denied that Hegel, too, distinguished between the actual and the real, and insisted that only the latter is rational in

any ultimate sense of the term, whether metaphysical or ethical. And this carries with it a recognition of the need—indeed, for Hegel, the inevitability—of reform. Of course, events have made us more critical of the principles of nationalism and more sceptical regarding the extent to which the collective life generally has become an expression of reason and right. Surely Professor Fullerton is entirely 'safe and sane' when he writes: "That the individual may, and if he is properly equipped for the task, ought, to examine critically his own moral intuitions and those of the community in which he finds himself, and should, with becoming modesty and hesitation, now and then suggest an innovation, means no more than that he and the community are not dead, but are living, and that progress is a possibility, at least" (p. 289). The Hegelianism of tradition finds an echo in such sentences as these: "To be sure, the court of last resort is the *Rational Social Will*. What is best for the State, and, hence, for those who compose it? What is practicable in the actual condition in which a given state finds itself at a given time? It seems too easy a solution of our problems to seek dogmatic answers to our questionings by having recourse to the 'natural light,' that ready oracle of the philosopher, Descartes" (p. 324; see also p. 326). It is argued (p. 352), that "it is the duty of an American to recognize himself as a Christian rather than as a Mahometan or a Pagan" for the reason that "I think we may be called a Christian nation." A genuine departure from Hegel does occur when, refraining from a detailed solution of particular ethical problems, the author suggests as guides "tradition, intuition and reflective reasoning" (p. 362) since "man has three counsellors: (1) The "objective" morality of his community—custom, law, and public opinion, which certainly deserve to be taken very seriously; (2) his moral intuitions, which may be of the finest; and (3) his reason, which prevents him from making decisions without reflection" (p. 302). What to do when these guides and counsellors differ does not clearly emerge.

Professor Fullerton distinguishes two doctrines concerning the nature and function of reason: the Kantian conception of reason as the source of ultimate moral requirements, as an independent law-giver, and the view that reason "serves its whole purpose in holding before the mind all its impulses and desires, revealing their interrelations, and making possible an enlightened and deliberate choice from among them" (p. 119). The latter view he regards as preferable. Reason is likened to "the presiding officer of a deliberative assembly, who insists that all the members shall be heard from, all proposals seriously considered, and that the ultimate decision shall justly represent the true will of the deliberative body as a whole" (p. 120). Desire is given a monopoly on motivating power, on the impelling forces that drive on to action. But in this case how can reason do as much even as restrain a desire from immediate expression and maintain a free and open

field within which congruous desires may come to its reinforcement while conflicting desires have an opportunity to array themselves in opposition until one group has established its supremacy by vanquishing the other? And if this represents the rôle of reason why speak of the outcome as rational instead of as an index of the relative strength of desires? These difficulties suggest the need of an interpretation of reason left unmentioned by the author, an interpretation in which reason is less sharply sundered from desire.

The book is attractive in form and has been carefully edited. The reference on p. 357 to the author's own *The World We Live In* should read xvi instead of vi; and as the text stands James's *Varieties of Religious Experience* is referred to as a later work than his *Pragmatism*.

EDWARD L. SCHAUB.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY.

The Reconstruction of Religion: A Sociological View. By CHARLES A. ELLWOOD. The Macmillan Company, New York, 1922.—pp. xv, 323.

"Even now, after two thousand years of slow emergence from barbarism," Professor Ellwood writes, "the world seems about to relapse back into it. . . . From the first so-called Christian civilization has been a very mixed affair. Much even in the Christian church has been non-Christian, or rather stark paganism" (p. 98). In recent decades new forces have arisen which have stimulated selfishness while they have at the same time weakened external authority. Hence there has been a trend away from genuinely social and humanitarian, that is to say Christian, ideals. The quest for power or for pleasure has determined the character of the present political, economical and social life; and these ideals have found championship in literature, science and philosophy. Just prior to the Great War this was conspicuously the case. Therefore the terrible calamities that befell the world and the dissensions and disasters which today threaten to destroy Western civilization.

Where lies the salvation? In vital, humanitarian religion, and this, the author affirms rather than demonstrates, is represented by Christianity alone. But the Christian church, he contends, has quite generally been kept by its strong infusion of paganism from discerning the fundamental teaching of its founder or from estimating aright its real mission; indeed, it has often manifested a serious social, even moral, insensibility—the pre-war trend away from humanitarianism "was appreciated by practically all careful students of Western civilization—yet the Christian church as a whole, and especially its leaders, remained strangely blind in the matter" (p. 94). Thus, while civilization cannot be preserved without the power of Christianity, the latter must itself be reconstructed. More particularly,